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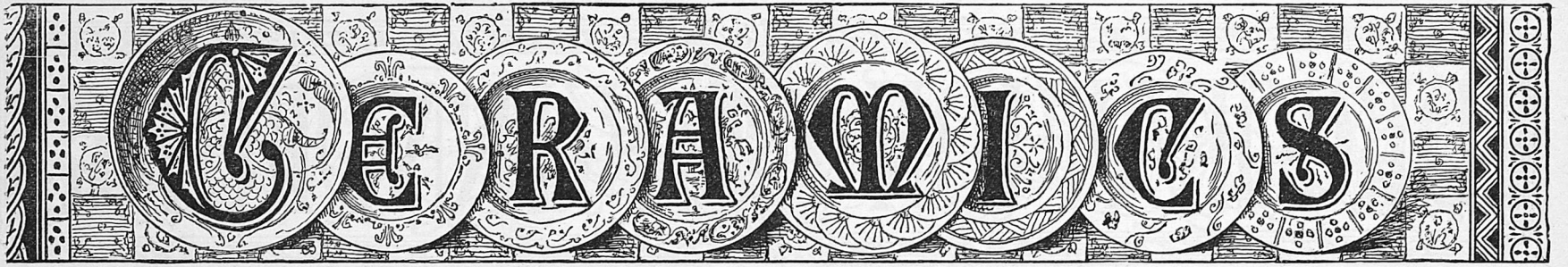
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HINTS TO CHINA PAINTERS.

XX.—THE USE OF RELIEF COLORS.



HE use of relief colors upon hard porcelain is usually confined to the production of raised patterns in gilding, the representation of the pattern in lace or embroidery or the glitter of reflected light upon shining surfaces. Even in this limited degree relief colors are a valuable addition to the palette of the china painter, but their use could be extended much farther in decorative work. Instances of such use can be found in Japanese and Chinese wares, in which relief colors form a very important part of the decoration. When the decoration is in any large degree to be produced by relief colors, it is better to choose ivory-white ware or some other kind of light earthenware as the body upon which to work, rather than hard porcelain, as relief colors are more likely to blister upon the latter substance when used in masses.

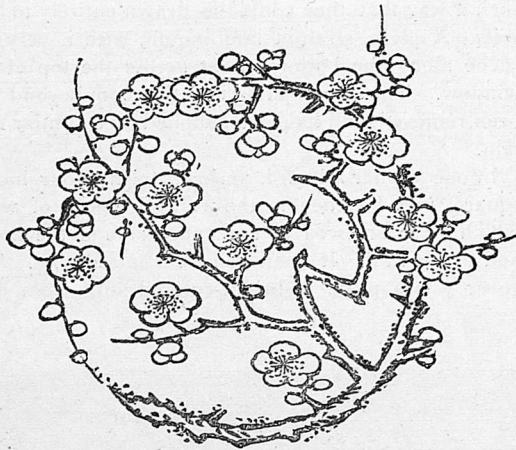
For producing relief in gilded work the best preparation is doubtless that of Hancock & Sons. This will bear a hard firing without blistering. It is simply a yellow relief color, which should be procured in the form of powder, and can be mixed with a very little fat oil and a considerable quantity of spirits of turpentine. If too much fat oil is used the paint will run, which will be fatal to the effect of the work, and it would also be more liable to blister in the firing. It could be used with spirits of turpentine alone, but the paint would crumble and rub off at the slightest touch before it had been fixed by the firing. It is better, therefore, to mix a drop of fat oil with it. The paint must be of such consistency that it can be lifted upon the brush in masses and transferred to the china, forming dots and figures in relief. These colors being necessarily opaque and intended to be used in masses, form a contrast to the other china colors, which are laid on in thin washes, or at most only in sufficient degree to cover the surface upon which they are applied. They will seem a little clumsy and difficult to manage at first, but by practice dexterity can be acquired. It is better to fire the relief pattern before applying the gold. If burnish gold is used, it can be burnished after firing, if required, just as if upon a flat surface. The royal Worcester porcelain furnishes many examples of very dainty use of relief, upon which both gold and bronzes of various colors are applied with excellent effect.

The Lemonnier ware affords an example of a distinct form of the use of relief colors. In this the ware upon which the decoration is produced is a kind of soft white or cream-colored earthenware, upon which flowers are painted in a naturalistic manner upon a clouded ground, usually of a dark color. The highest lights of the flowers are laid in with relief colors, the remainder of the design being in transparent tints. To decorate in this style take white or light cream-colored earthenware and paint flowers of a light color upon a dark mottled ground. To save the trouble of scratching out the design after the background has been painted, paint the design with powdered chalk mixed with gum water before laying in the background.

The whole surface of the design must be painted over solidly with the chalk and gum water, and care must be taken to have the outlines correct. In order to see these outlines without difficulty during the process of laying in the design, the chalk may be colored with some bright water color such as carmine. When this is dry, the background can be laid in with a large brush all over the surface without any care as to the design.

A very pretty background can be made with brown

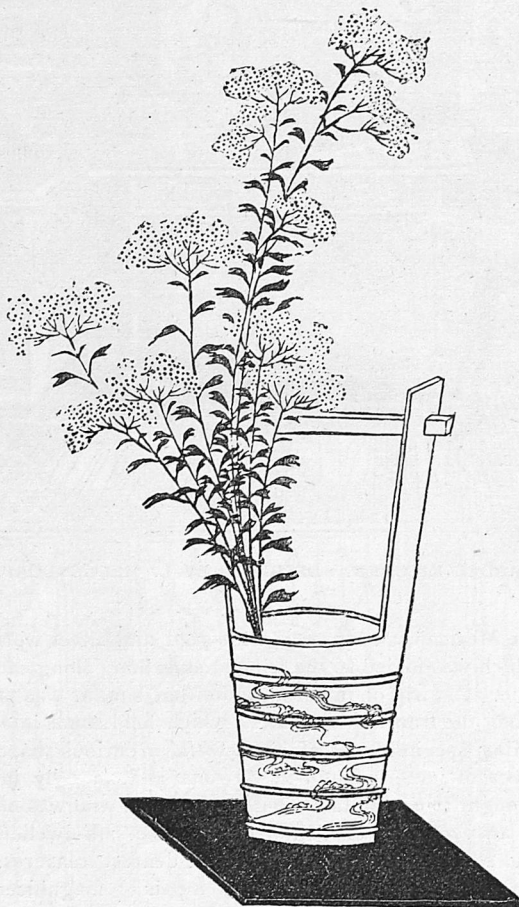
green, deep blue green, and green No. 36. The colors, in considerable quantity, if the surface is of any size, may be rubbed down separately with a little spirits of turpentine, and only mixed with the brush in laying on the background, producing an effect of varied tints in which the colors appear alone and in every variety of combination. When the background has become thoroughly dry, either soak the piece in



JAPANESE MONOCHROME DECORATION.

water or let water from a faucet run over it. The chalk and gum water can then be gently detached from the surface with the finger or with a bit of cotton, leaving the design in white upon the ware. It can then be painted in the usual manner, except that the highest lights are to be laid in with relief colors.

Another use of relief colors, which may be mentioned, is for decoration in the style of Longwy ware.



JAPANESE MONOCHROME DECORATION.

This is done upon the unglazed surface of white or cream-colored earthenware. A kind of ware of soft white body, glazed upon the inside but entirely without glaze on the outside, can be procured for the purpose. The whole surface to be decorated is then covered with a mosaic of color in relief, the design being outlined with black. The outline should be

painted first with clear black lines, which it would be better to fire before the relief colors are laid in. When the outline of the entire design has been prepared, the colors are painted in the spaces between the lines. They must be mixed with fat oil and turpentine and made rather thin, as the unglazed surface of the ware absorbs the turpentine, and it will be impossible to lay the color properly if it is too dry. The paint must be applied very thickly, because there should be an actual relief after firing, and it should not be so thin as to reveal the surface of the ware through the colors. Roughness in the surface of this mosaic of color need not give any concern, as the firing will reduce and transform its unsightly appearance, and it will come from the fire with the smoothness and beauty of enamel. The color will be much darker and more brilliant, and it will be necessary to provide for this change. The defect of the ware of this style, as generally seen, is gaudiness of color. No great variety of tints can be procured in relief colors, two or three shades each of red, green, yellow and blue, with black and white, being the extent, but they can be mixed with each other or with the transparent colors to change the tints. White relief color can also be laid on and afterward washed over with various transparent colors.

Care must be taken in using relief and transparent colors to employ different brushes for the two kinds of colors, or the brushes used for the relief colors should be very carefully washed before being used for transparent colors.

The reason for this is that the relief colors are rather gritty, and although this quality is not apparent after they are fired, some of these gritty particles may adhere to the brush used for them, if it is not carefully washed, and these particles becoming mixed with the transparent colors, will produce a disagreeable roughness on the surface.

These methods of using relief colors have been described for the guidance of the china painter, but they do not necessarily limit the use of these colors, and are merely offered as suggestions from which other uses of these important aids in decoration may be evolved.

M. LOUISE McLAUGHLIN.

IMITATION "OLD SÈVRES."

THE "Revue des Arts Decoratifs" has declared war against the makers and venders of counterfeits of works of art, and has opened by an attack on the false porcelains of Sèvres. Two ways of distinguishing the imitations made during the Restoration and since from the real old Sèvres are given. The first relates to the coloring. It seems that chrome-green, which was discovered only in 1802, is the principal green used in the decoration of the false ware, while in real old Sèvres the only green used in the landscapes and bouquets of flowers and leaves was derived from copper. The former is sensibly warmer in tone than the latter.

The second way is to mark the method of part-burnishing that has been employed. In both the true and the false ware the surface of the gilding is in general mat or dead. In the real it was burnished in lines by means of metal nails with rounded points, which were set in a piece of wood. The imitations, of later date than the real, have been burnished in a similar manner, but with an agate. It required considerably more force to obtain a bright surface by the ancient method than by the use of the agate point; hence the burnished lines in the genuine ware are perceptibly sunken, while in the counterfeit ware they are flush with the general surface of the gilding.

Some of the most successful imitators in other respects did not give themselves the trouble to copy exactly the marks which have served since 1753 to denote the date of fabrication. As all those marks are well known, this serves as a third means of distinguishing the true from the false in many cases.